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[p.1052] Sierra Tarascans

632 *barrio* III. Cheranástico, when classed as *barrio* V, apparently never filled either office. Similarly, if the even-numbered *barrios* elect, the mayor will be from *barrio* II, the *síndico* from *barrio* IV. The following 2-year period the situation will be reversed. Although the mayor is elected for 2 years to the *ayuntamiento*, he serves only 1 year as mayor. The second year he is merely an ordinary *munícipe* or *regidor*, that is, an ordinary member of the *ayuntamiento*.

The mayor has the most important duties in the government, for upon his ability and initiative depends most of the success of an administration. It is he who initiates most activities, the *síndico* who carries them out. Not only does the mayor preside at town meetings or *juntas* and meetings of the *ayuntamiento*, but he settles minor disputes and levies fines of less than 1 peso, orders temporary imprisonment, supervises and orders most municipal expenditures, appoints most of the *comisionados*, and sees that public works are initiated. The mayor alone of all the officials must be present daily in the *municipio*. If not present, he must have his *suplente* present. (In 1940, the mayor rarely was in the *municipio*, leaving administration to the *suplente*. If anything of crucial importance arose, however, the mayor would be called in.)

632 As a minor judicial official, the mayor settles
693 many small cases involving thefts, drunkenness, minor assault, rape, debt, or fraud. In some cases, brief jail sentences are imposed; in others, fines are assessed, all fines below a peso going into the pocket of the mayor as his only salary. The mayor also gives orders about minor improvements, such as cleaning the plaza or painting the benches. In case expenditures are involved, he may advance money out of his pocket for supplies or labor, later getting a receipt which he presents to the treasurer for payment.

Síndico.—The *síndico* supervises most public
632 works and may initiate minor work. He is in charge of streets and the repair or reconstruction of bridges, and sees that many undertakings ordered by the mayor are carried out. With the help of a *veedor*, he oversees community affairs, such as the adequacy of the water supply and clandestine illegal activities.

632 He is in charge of the slaughterhouse; the collection of proper taxes and prevention of "black market" slaughtering are his responsibility. He supervises all questions of inheritance and the properties connected therewith, seeing that the heirs receive their due share of property. In cases of quarrels over inheritance, wounds
● [693] inflicted with knives or pistols, and murders, the *síndico* makes the initial investigations and prepares the papers for submission of the cases to the judge. The *síndico* receives no pay.

Secretary.—The secretary is named by the
632 mayor with the approval of the *ayuntamiento*
217 without a fixed term being set. His duties are to make all classes of documents and to maintain the municipal archives. These include the birth, death, and marriage records of the town. The secretary is paid $1.50 a day. He may augment this sum by preparing private documents for a fee. The office is fairly new; in the childhood of fairly young men there was no secretary. The present incumbent is not a native of the town.

632 *Veedor.*—The veedor is named by the *síndico* with the approval of the mayor. He is supposed to see that the water supply is functioning properly and to report any illegal acts. Apparently he receives no pay.

Treasurer.—The treasurer receives all the
632 town funds from various sources, including
651 fines above 1 peso, taxes, assessments, and funds from State and Federal sources. He is responsible for the collection of the small tax on vendors at the markets. He pays all bills of the *municipio* and must keep detailed accounts which are inspected by State officials. The office of treasurer is also new. His pay is 25 percent of the income. There is no term to his office.

Judge.—The judge and his *suplente* are
693 usually elected every 2 years but if the office is
632 satisfactorily filled, the election may not be held for 3 or 4 years. The judge hears all cases certified to him by the *síndico*. He may order brief imprisonment or fines, which are paid to the treasurer, but all serious cases are referred to the district court at Uruapan after a preliminary hearing. This is particularly true of murder cases or serious crimes. The judge reviews all cases of inheritance in which quarrels arise, and all land sales must be authorized

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632 before the judge. In such cases he may dis-
693 cover falsified documents, and will levy fines against the guilty party. Disputes over land ownership may come before him also and usually will be settled without reference to higher authorities. An example of the latter type of case occurred where a person occupied lands belonging to Aurelio Ceja S., which the latter had registered for 20 years. The intruder was
[685] sentenced to return the land, pay the owner 10
[691] percent of the value, and all costs of the litigation.

The judge receives no pay, but he is assisted by a secretary who is paid $1 a day by the *municipio*. The secretary may collect fees for preparing private documents. More detail on judicial cases will be given later.

625 .*Police.*—Two (later three) men were em-
632 ployed as police in 1940-41. Their main duties were not actually police functions, however, but rather the running of errands and carrying messages for the mayor, *síndico*, and judge. Most real police functions are carried out by the *síndico*, *veedor*, and the *ronda*. The police receive 75 centavos daily; all are persons incapacitated in some way for heavy work.

Comisionados.—There are many kinds and
632 classes of *comisionados*. Perhaps most impor-
624 tant are the four *barrio* chiefs, the *jefes de cuartel*, appointed by the mayor each year. These men, together with the previous officials, are exempt from any other service during their year of office. The *barrio* chief commands the block chiefs and also the *ronda*. He transmits instructions of the *ayuntamiento* to the block chiefs when necessary.

The block chiefs are also appointed by the mayor for 1 year, and they have no other duties. On instructions from the *barrio* chief, the block chiefs notify the residents in their block if any communal labor is necessary, such as repairs to the water system, road or bridge work, clearing of town boundaries, or work in connection with a fiesta etc., and they see that each person does his duty. Special block chiefs may be named for unusual events such as the taking of the census. Such special block chiefs serve only for the time necessary to complete their special assignment.

632 The *ronda* is a "voluntary" night watch. The
625 town is patrolled every night by a group of 8 to